PLEASURE AND BEYOND: A PSYCHO-PATHOLOGICAL STUDY OF *ANNA KARENINA*

Shivalika Agarwal* & Dr Nagendra Kumar**

*Research Scholar, Department of Humanities & Social Sciences, IIT Roorkee. Email: agarwal.shivalika200@gmail.com

**Professor, Department of Humanities & Social Sciences, IIT Roorkee. Email: nagendra.kumar@hs.iitr.ac.in

Abstract: Pleasure and unpleasure are the two binaries upon which our psychic behavioural development is built. An inconsiderable past memory, event, relationship, or what Jacques Lacan (Lacan 1955) calls a 'lack' can drive us into a state of harsh emotional shock, as a repercussion of which we may encounter an unconscious feeling of unpleasure. The Freudian elaboration on what happens beyond the 'pleasure principle' in psychopathology is closely intertwined with how we suffer from repressing our pleasures as well as unpleasures. A repressed 'emotional burden' known or unknown to us, even as basic as losing our favourite toy, may pull us into a state of Traumatic Neurosis' (Freud 1920), creating distress in the psyche. This displeasure finds its transference into gratification via repetitive dreams or activities with one or more manifestations. Our mind works on the principle of *repetitive compulsion*. Recreating images, events, games, or activities helps us gain control over similar situations that have caused all the unpleasurable experiences, thus helping transfer the resisted repression held by the ego to the pleasure principle and master the negative experiences. The backward movement to encounter a deathlike effect of despair in intimacy, without restoring the original balance of life and death instincts but an inclination to attract physical and psychological *pain*, is more like a *death-in-life* confrontation. In this study, we intend to show how Anna Karenina, the protagonist of Leo Tolstoy's novel *Anna Karenina*, in pursuit of her unfulfilled pleasures, repetitively follows the same destiny of unpleasure, losing her balance between ego and sexual drives, and losing life to inexorable death.

Keywords: Pleasure, unpleasure, Anna, drives, repetition, neurosis, psyche, death.

Introduction

Leo Tolstoy's Anna Karenina (1877), purported to be a fictional work encapsulating the plot of an adulteress, *Anna Karenina*, morally and spiritually punished for the rectification of the 'misdeed' conducted by her, is veritably the story of how a woman attracts pain when in search and need of a pleasurable life. Anna, a married woman, when locates love outside marriage and outside the instructions of Russian society, her psyche deteriorates, and eventually, she loses grip on her life. Karenin is a reputed government official with a name and fame in Saint Petersburg but not a treasured life partner for Anna. In the spirit of reparation for the marriage of her brother Stiva and his wife Dolly, Anna inadvertently drops off her marriage to find love in another relationship with Vronsky. She gives up on some enticing possessions to commence with this new yet fulfilling and intense love with Vronsky, unlike Karenin's dissatisfying and dull love. Anna considers herself liable for the sufferings of Karenin and their son Seryozha, yet realises that a partner who loves her [Vronsky] is her desire and not a loveless marriage, and

eventually chooses Vronsky over everything. This decision changes her life completely; she travels to Italy, suffers sleepless and insecure nights, and becomes an outcast in Russian society which ultimately edges her to death.

Anna Karenina, the heroine of the novel, becomes an 'adulteress' in the process of following her happiness. But was it happiness indeed? Happiness has slight difference from sensory pleasure. According to Margaret Paul, 'Pleasurable experiences can give us momentary feelings of happiness, but this happiness does not last long because it depends on external events and experiences. We have to keep on having good experiences -- more food, more drugs or alcohol, more money, more sex, in order to feel pleasure. As a result, many people become addicted to these external experiences, needing more and more to feel a short-lived feeling of happiness' (Paul 2015). Thus, while reading the novel, it becomes difficult to apprehend the needs of Anna. Nineteenth-century was the time of unmasking the miseries of women in marriage and puncturing the societal code of conjugal duties. Tolstoy presents two contrasting marriages to the readers: Anna and Karenin and Kitty and Levin. Both the females are contrastingly portrayed, where Kitty becomes the comfortable, dedicated, and compromising wife, whereas Anna doesn't adjust to the bland marriage and elite lifestyle and chooses to be called an adulteress, rather than a part of Karenin's life.

The present article does a textual analysis of Leo Tolstoy's Anna Karenina by drawing attention to an alternate comprehension of Anna's decisions, life, and death. The article follows the pursuit of pleasure in Anna's life to investigate how Anna's lack of pleasure leads her to seek it elsewhere, like Vronsky, Italy, and her multiple accommodations. The study would also highlight how this pleasure pursuit is an alternative to an unpleasurable pressure in her life that she thirsts to abate. This substitution further leads her to discontentment and an unsatisfied life as the quest for pleasure leads her to Vronsky, but the satisfaction is temporary, superseded by unpleasure and death. Sigmund Freud thoroughly discussed the idea of what exists beyond pleasure in his article "Beyond The Pleasure Principle" in 1920. A brief discussion and understanding of Freud's essay becomes mandatory to locate Anna's identity, her psychological projections towards pleasure, and move beyond it.

Beyond the Pleasure Principle

In psychoanalytic theory, we assume without further ado that the evolution of psychic processes is automatically regulated by the pleasure principle; that is to say, we believe that these processes are invariably triggered by an unpleasurable tension and then follow a path such that their ultimate outcome represents a diminution of this tension, and hence a propensity to avoid unpleasure or to generate pleasure (Freud 1920, 71). Pleasure Pursuit is something that psychologists have had an interest in for a long time. It is the propensity to chase

sensory excitement and pleasures. It's the trait of people's intense and complex sensations, love experience for its own sake, and who may take severe risks in pursuing such experience. The psychology of characters and writers has been under the notice of researchers, critics, and psychologists since the start of the 20th century. With his psychoanalytical concepts and theories, Freud paved the path for psychological literature too. Not only did he [Freud] introduce the pleasure principle but also drove us to what is beyond pleasure and how and why one reaches there in his essay, "Beyond the Pleasure Principle" (1920).

The essay is framed with four major high points. First, he [Freud] highlights the contradictory forces of 'pleasure' and 'unpleasure.' He believed that the level of excitation in the psyche determines whether the experiences are pleasurable or not. Freud argues that the facts that have had our belief in the domination of the pleasure principle within the psyche of humans also familiarise our supposition that another inclination of the psychic machinery is to keep the quantity of excitation within it at the minimum possible level, or at least to keep it constant, where both are similar. If the psychic apparatus is adapted to lowering the quantity of excitation, then factors tending to increase that excitation are bound to be experienced as unpleasurable. But another noteworthy point here is to remember that unpleasure cannot be identified with pain. Instead, unpleasure is a vast term inclusive of pain of all kinds along with other negative feelings and emotions. David Bain & Michael Brady, in their essay "Pain, Pleasure, and Unpleasure," explicates:

> We use pain, narrowly, to refer to so-called physical pains, experiences in which a subject has—or seems to have— pains in a part of her own body, for example, in her hand, immersed in freezing water. We, therefore, eschew its broader use, in which it refers to all states of suffering, not only those involving physical pain but also grief, depression, anxiety, and so forth. Our focus on the negative side of the sensory effect extends beyond pain, however, to all unpleasant sensory experiences. We'll call these unpleasures (Bain and Brady 2014).

Second, Freud dedicates a portion of his essay to discussing Traumatic Neurosis. He states that a 'frightful' or 'dangerous' memory from the past could trigger psychological turmoil creating a pattern of actions based on those memories to fulfil the 'economic perspective' of these psychic processes: the concern of the individual to gain pleasure (Freud 1920,71). He further writes:

> In the case of ordinary traumatic neurosis, two features stand out very clearly and have proved a useful starting point for further thought: first, the fact that the key causative element appeared to lie in the surprise factor, the fright experienced by the victim; and second, the fact that if any physical

> wound or injury was suffered at the same time, this generally inhibited the development of the neurosis (Freud 1920, 76).

Third, with the example of a child's play, Freud focuses on how traumatic neurosis works on the principle of 'repetitive compulsion.' An unpleasant experience develops unconsciously in a person's psyche, 'repeating itself' like a dream, action, game, likes, jokes, etc. One continues to compulsorily repeat the same outburst of unpleasure [the child repeatedly likes to involve in the same playing activity that is pleasurable to him once] as it unknowingly imparts pleasure to him, thus replacing the unpleasurable experience with an authoritative sensory pleasure. Robert Clark, while referring to Freud's theory of pleasure and beyond, states that Freud's theory of 'the compulsion to repeat" is "a psychological phenomenon in which a person feels the need to repeat, remember and work through [traumatic] memories that have been repressed' (Robert Clark 2005).

Finally, he expounds on the theory of instincts/drives. Drive, according to Freud, is a powerful tendency intrinsic in humans to 'restore a prior state' that they were forced to renounce due to 'disruptive external forces' (Freud 1920, 100). He followed the dualist approach and introduced the dichotomies of Ego/Sexual drives, the drives towards death and life, respectively, where one leads to the opposite other. It is the balance between these drives that maintains the balance between pleasure and unpleasure. Repetition of a psychological phenomenon is the re-establishment of the compromised and partially satisfied drives. When an action fails to satisfy us entirely, the resulting frustration and indignity increase the tension to a point where we go after the nearest potential gratification, striving for the action again. Freud exhibits in his essay that:

> The repressed drive never abandons its struggle to achieve full gratification, which would consist in the repetition of a primary gratification experience. All the sublimations and reaction-formations and surrogate formations in the world are never enough to resolve the abiding tension, and the gulf between the level of gratificatory pleasure demanded, and the level actually achieved produces that driving force that prevents the individual from resting content with any situation he ever contrives (Freud 1920, 105).

Anna's Unpleasure

Tolstoy's Anna Karenina diligently searches for the pleasure she has been deprived of in her marriage with Alexei Karenin. Unaware of the dissatisfaction she unconsciously holds inside her psyche, she drives herself to alternatives to gratifying her incompleted pleasures — 'enjoyment' in Lacan's vocabulary or 'desire' for Deleuze. 'Your wife gets older while you're full of life. Before you've time to look around, you feel that you can't love your wife with love, however

much you may esteem her,' Stiva Oblonsky summarises his outlook of pleasure in and outside marriage in the stated line, which develops into the exact identical perplexity of his sister Anna (Tolstoy 1877, 76). She remains associated with her husband in an unpassionate, loveless marriage only out of the fear of being separated from Seryozha, her eight-year-old son, whom she loves the most. But when she meets Countess Vronskaya on the train, they 'have been talking of nothing but you (Vronsky) all the way' (Tolstoy 1877, 114). She gets captivated by the description of Vronsky and imagines him as a person while on the train itself. This is why, at a glance, Vronsky could notice the 'suppressed eagerness' that hovered between her 'brilliant eyes' and the 'faint smile' of Anna (Tolstoy 1877, 112).

With the introduction of Vronsky, Anna finds it irresistible to ignore him because he becomes the picture of her desires. Anna's unpleasure drags her to an unconscious play of satisfying herself, with the control being in her hands in the form of a love affair with Vronsky. While she talks to Vronsky about him, Anna's bodily description of Karenin is clearly an indication of the repulsion she suffers from him. At the same time, Vronsky's physicality is stressed to the point where even purely mental activities, such as settling one's financial affairs, are described as bodily pampering. This differentiation of the description of the two rivals for Anna's attention amplifies the perception she holds of the two. Tatiana Kuzmic, in the essay, 'The Mind, the Body, and the Love Triangle in *Anna Karenina*,' observes:

> The few times that Karenin's physical features are described, they are literally devoid of flesh, such as his "easily chilled and bony legs" (297) and his incessant joint-cracking, in itself a hint at boniness. His face is described as "bloodless" and "worn" or "thin and his eyes as "motionless" and "dull" (375), invoking more of an image of a dead than a living man. Even his voice is "thin," in both his conversation at a committee meeting (335) and his confrontation with Anna (337). Finally, when Anna speaks of him to Vronsky, she repeatedly describes him as "not a man, but a machine" and a "ministerial machine" (375) (Kuzmic 2007).

Traumatic Neurosis in Anna

The Encyclopedia defines Traumatic Neurosis as '. . . a psycho-pathological state characterised by various disturbances arising soon or long after an intense emotional shock' ("Traumatic Neurosis" Encyclopedia). Further, Traumatic Neurosis, as per Freud, occurs due to a frightful experience, a *danger* that comes as a 'surprise' when we are not ready for it. Anna suffers this psychological agitation when Karenin confronts Anna regarding her closeness with Vronsky. 'Her face was brilliant and glowing, but this glow was not the one of

brightness; it suggested the fearful glow of a conflagration in the midst of a dark night' (Tolstoy 1877, 263). Anna's marriage to a reputed government official, but without love, affection, or attention, leaves her in a state of emotional tremor that we don't notice initially. Her disturbed marriage and dull life, without passion and love, piled up a series of differences and shocks in Anna, leading her towards this state of neurosis.

Anna undergoes stupefaction with pain in her life with her 'not a man, but a machine' husband: 'Love? Can he love? If he hadn't heard there was such a thing as love. . .. He doesn't even know what love is' (Tolstoy 1877, 267). Karenin tries to guide her in the name of religion and spirituality to stop her from pursuing her affair with Vronsky, which Anna superficially handles admirably but affects her unknowingly. As Freud argues in his essay, 'I am not aware that those suffering from traumatic neurosis are very much preoccupied with their waking life with memories of their misadventure. Perhaps, instead, they are at pains not to think of it' (Freud 1920, 77). As a result, Anna is considered 'evil and deceitful' by Karenin (Tolstoy 1877, 269), yet she continues seeking pleasure from elsewhere and fulfils her 'entrancing dream of bliss' (Tolstoy 1877, 270). Peaceful yet agitated, this state of mind overpowers her completely; nonetheless, while her *ego* is at work, she successfully manages to *repress* her unpleasure and escapes to anything that could aid her in disguising her unpleasure with the otherwise alternate pleasure. However, when asleep, her distress plays like a film to her, and she dreams of everything that she has been rejecting. In her dreams, she saw everything she had feared in her day. Tolstoy mentions the uncontrollable nature of Anna's thoughts and dreams and expounds:

> But in dreams, when she had no control over her thoughts, her position presented itself to her in all its hideous nakedness. One dream haunted her almost every night. She dreamed that both were her husbands at once, that both were lavishing caresses at her (Tolstoy 1877, 272).

Not only was her emotional suffering due to the 'lack' that her marriage suffered, but also because of what she had in the marriage. She enjoyed being a part of the elite society, which was not an available opportunity with Vronsky [as she was insulted and questioned at parties from then on], and what she relished with Vronsky was unaccounted for in her relationship with Karenin. This is why she dreamt of both men as her husbands and her liberty of fulfilling all her desires. 'Alexey Alexandrovitch was weeping, kissing her hands, and saying, "How happy we are now!" And Vronsky was there too, and he too was her husband' (Tolstoy 1877, 272).

Furthermore, Tolstoy successfully portrays Anna as a tender, loving, and motherly figure, genuinely in love with her son, the only zone of satisfaction when she was amidst an unsatisfactory marriage. When Anna visits Seryozha on his

birthday with toys, she is overwhelmed with love and joy and is full of tears: 'Anna looked at him hungrily; she saw how he had grown and changed in her absence. . .. she had so often kissed him. She touched all this and could say nothing; tears choked her' (Tolstoy 1877, 954). Amid her strife of passion for Vronsky and duty for Karenin, Anna was not only in the misery of not living a passionate love life with Karenin but also compromising on her pleasure and her child. She expected her life to be usual; 'Thank goodness, tomorrow I'll see Seryozha and Alexey Alexandrovich and my life- my nice everyday life, Life- will go on as before,' but she couldn't avoid dreaming of the trauma that all these incidents have had on her psyche (Tolstoy 1877, 856).

In *Tolstoy's Major Fiction,* Edward Wasiolek writes: 'The peasant who appears at this point [immediately after Anna's suicide] and who has appeared in her dreams is probably a symbol of the remorseless, impersonal power of sex. As she beats the iron, he pays no attention to her' (Wasiolek 1978, 153). Though it is not easy to figure out the disturbance, Anna suffers from the start of the novel, yet gradually as the life and story progress and her dreams start operating in her thoughts, it becomes evident. Therefore, it would be correct what Freud points out, "The fact that the traumatic experience repeatedly forces itself on the patient even during sleep is assumed to be proof indeed of just how deep an impression it made. The patient is assumed to be, so to speak, psychically fixated on the trauma" (Freud 1920, 79).

Repetitive Compulsion in Anna

While going through the novel, it becomes evident that Anna established contentment only when she was with or around Vronsky. Her affair with Vronsky gave her the opportunity to become the master of this relationship, with full attention on her, which was missing in her relationship with Karenin: "Oh, not over my husband," she said ". . . I don't know him; I don't think of him. He doesn't exist" (Tolstoy 1877, 342). Anna's affiliation with Vronsky could not provide her with complete positivity; however, she overlooked the miseries caused, as the satisfaction obtained from dominating this relationship, unlike that with Karenin, gave her more joy. In Freud's words:

> We might also bear in mind that the form of play and imitation practiced by adults . . . does not spare its spectators the most painful of experiences, for instance in the performance of tragedies, and yet may nonetheless be regarded by them as something supremely enjoyable. This encourages us in the conviction that even under the dominion of the pleasure principle there are ways and means enough for turning what is essentially unpleasurable into something to be remembered and to be processed in the psyche (Freud 1920,81).

Freud divides the structure of the human psyche into the *id, ego, and superego* (Freud 1923). The Id stores our libidinal desires, and the Ego becomes the rational part, bringing us back to reality. Therefore, a pleasurable experience for the Id can undoubtedly become displeasure for the ego, but a repressed desire would be fulfilled for sure since it opens the "workings of repressed drive-impulses" (Freud 1920, 84). This is why even a threat to our repressions produces pleasure. This "pleasure of relief" (David Bain & Michael Brady 2014) induces the compulsion to repeat in a person. Anna repressed all her unpleasures in her Id and was accustomed to being with Karenin, but when she met Vronsky, she felt inclined towards him in the very first meeting. She was fascinated by his looks and the grandeur that Madame Vronskaya narrated, yet her Ego resisted her from acting toward fulfilling her repressed desires.

On the contrary, she felt the same 'pleasure of relief' every time she met Vronsky; "I am like a hungry man who has been given food. He may be cold, and dressed in rags and ashamed, but is not unhappy" (Tolstoy 1877, 347). This became the reason for her unconscious compulsion to repeat her meetings, passion, and relationship with Vronsky, for which her internal and external flexibility were activated. To quote an example, just after the news of Vronsky's accident in the horse race, Anna's sole concern lies in, "Is he killed or not? Is it true? Will he come or not? Shall I see him today?" (Tolstoy 1877, 385). She could not think of anything except the meeting with Vronsky and will he visit her and keep his promise or not. Anna's attachment to Vronsky is not only about love but about filling in the gaps that Anna had in her life. She enjoyed being with or around him till she got everything she wanted. After the life returning to the typical family structure, even with Vronsky, Anna denies that too.

Anna and Vronsky's love is passionate but superficial. Anna loves Vronsky for all that her life lacks, and Vronsky loves Anna for her beauty and elegance. They continue meeting, even when everybody seems to be against them because they fulfil the empty voids in each other's lives. Vronsky is "a man unprepared for a relationship of any permanence" (Williams 1995). Also, as Gary Morson indicates, "For Anna, everything seems to fit a melodramatic plot centring on a great passion" (Morson 1995, 834). Thus, it would not be wrong to claim that their meeting, re-meeting, having a child together, travelling to places to avoid criticism, and all the efforts to continue with their love life were just a measure to seek pleasure otherwise unavailable to them. However, as Aaron Schuster, in his book, *The Trouble with Pleasure,* points out: "Repetition is not a secondary effect or the consequence of something going wrong, but expresses the very core of the drives, the fact that they are skewed from the start," Anna's repetition of being with Vronsky, acquiring attention from Levin, were the forces of her drives that have

been tempered from the starting of her life full of monotony and compromises (Schuster 2016, 77).

Thus, repetition acts as a curative agent to the repressions and becomes a highlighter of the dominant instincts within a person's psyche.

Anna's Death

Guy M. Thompson, in *The Death of Desire,* writes:

> He [Freud] was the first to recognise the powerful effect that our parents, in fact all our relationships, have on us and how our capacity to love is also the source of the most profound suffering. Freud was also the first to recognise that the myth of mental illness, our demand for love, is unremitting and insatiable, no matter how much we get, and that we are most vulnerable when at the mercy of the people we love (Thompson 2016, 10).

Anna's need for love is unremitting and insatiable, and this is why when she meets Vronsky for the second time, she experiences "a strange feeling of pleasure (eros) and at the same time of dread of something (death instinct) stirred in her heart" (Tolstoy 1877, 138). This feeling since then has been a continuous one, the pleasure of her unfulfilled desires being fulfilled and dreading her conscious self-criticism. This struggle of Id and Ego is what leads us to the "energetic external influences," or what Freud also terms as a *danger* to cut short the way to one's life goal, i.e., 'death' because "all goal of life is death" (Freud 1920, 103). Every individual is born to die, but death in natural form is the restoration of the organic drives (life instincts). So, what is the reason for death instincts being activated when these drives attain the initial state of life? The compulsion to repeat goes beyond the pleasure principle with the admission that there was also a time before the purpose of dreams was to fulfil wishes. This is because one defends oneself from these internal dangers by subliming them into dreams. The function of these traumatic dreams then is to master the stimulus retrospectively. But when this mastery doesn't occur, and the repetition occurs even to the point where it turns out to be unpleasurable, the two driving forces that one holds inside (life and death), the organism suffers from negative emotions like anxiety, aggression, suicidal thoughts representing the death drive.

Anna's drives of passion and aggression dominated her life throughout. When she chased pleasure, her death drives were under control. Her relationship with Vronsky is the repetition that could restore her past state of order. But this repetition goes beyond pleasure and stimulates unpleasure. Vronsky, even though in love with Anna, realises that he is not as happy as he imagined he would be, as Tolstoy writes:

> Vronsky, meanwhile, in spite of the complete realisation of what he had so long desired, was not perfectly happy. He soon felt that the realisation of his desires gave him no more than a grain of sand out of the mountain of happiness he had expected (Tolstoy 1877, 833).

A sudden change in his priorities reduces the amount of control Anna had over this relationship. They travel to Italy, where Anna feels utmost pleasure; she confesses to Dolly that she is "inexcusably happy" (Tolstoy 1877, 1095). However, Vronsky starts missing his professional life; he does not want to have a dream world of the two but a world with his occupational success too; "I am happy, happy in her love, but I must have occupation" (Tolstoy 1877, 1120). This clash of priorities and choices fades the line of passion between the two, as the rosy tenure of the romantic relationship appears to be nearing an end. Anna had been with Vronsky to gratify and master her repressions, but with her desire getting a shorter life, the conflict of the life and death drives within Anna seems to have a bent toward the death drives. She mentions depression, denies motherhood, which she agrees was "different with my first child" (Tolstoy 1877, 1105), and later states, "I shall have no more children" (Tolstoy 1877, 1137). Eros that brought her to Italy, to Vronsky, to pursue her pleasure is now laid back. Since the start of the novel, Anna is seen struggling between her love for Seryozha and Vronsky. She definitely chooses Vronsky, but her contentment transforms into discontentment, and she becomes "simply unhappy" (Tolstoy 1877, 1143), in clear contrast to her prior emotion of being "inexcusably happy" (Tolstoy 1877, 1095).

Freud mentions that "The manifestations of a compulsion to repeat . . . plainly bear the stamp of drives, and wherever they are in opposition to the pleasure principle, they equally plainly exhibit their daemonic character" (Freud 1920, 99). This is what exactly happens with Anna; her compulsion to repeat goes beyond pleasure, and her death drive overpowers her life instincts. She tries to calm herself down with the morphine addiction, but she becomes more and more 'irritable and jealous.' Aaron Schuster further observes: "For Freud, the death drive has two basic expressions: a compulsion to repeat that is not reducible to the reproduction of a prior pleasure and aggressiveness that is not explainable in terms of deprivation and frustration" (Schuster 2016, 86). Correspondingly, Anna's aggression is not only about not being able to reproduce the prior pleasure but also about the repetition of the same destiny that she and Karenin's relationship suffered after a certain period of time. She undergoes anxiety about standing in a similar position again, with an even more significant loss than before. In his article, 'Peasant Dreams in Anna Karenina,' Gary Browning observes that "Anna's loss of unobtainable ideal results in an accompanying despair at perceived coarse and even sexual relations with her men finally impel her to self-destruction" (Browning 2000, 2).

Anna tries to turn her drive of self-destruction outwards and becomes anxious and aggressive towards the outside world. For instance, back at the hotel from the party, Anna explodes an unfair attack on Vronsky; "You, you are to blame for everything!" (Tolstoy 1877, 980). Further, her erratic actions of sometimes flirting with Levin, and writing multiple letters with mixed emotions to Vronsky to return at other times, become a replica of her obnoxiousness but goes all in vain. She tries to exert her misery in the relationship away by attracting Levin, and she "likes him indeed extremely." She noticed something that "they [Vronsky and Levin] had in common" that made her like him (Tolstoy 1877, 1255). But failure in carrying out her repressions successfully, her 'Thanatos' turned outwards and suddenly experience an inward shift, where she feels "sorry for herself and burst into tears" (Tolstoy 1877, 1258). Anna's neurosis becomes evident in the second half of the novel, and towards the close of the novel, her frame of mind worsens even more. Her uncontainable thoughts of the unworthy life she leads make her vulnerable without any rescue. Discovering herself engrossed in such a position, she realises that her love has grown "passionate and egoistic" (Tolstoy 1877, 1360), and Vronsky cannot reciprocate the same feelings anymore. Distressed, she succumbs to the forces of the ego drives and runs in front of the carriage at the railway station, thus embracing death.

Gary L Browning also observes in his essay 'The Death of Anna Karenina: Anna's Share of the Blame' that:

> The poisonous fruit of Anna's romantic and suicidal fantasy, of her more frequent recourse to deception, and of her disintegrating personality combines with Vronsky's inability to keep pace (his awkward movement, general ineptitude, superficiality, dilettantism, insensitivity, and annoying overconfidence) to claim its victims. (Browning 1986, 337)

Conclusion

The analysis above clearly follows how Anna's psychic development suffers in the conflict of life and death drives. As we study her life closely, her suicide becomes an example of what happens when the quest for pleasure goes beyond the principle of pleasure. It becomes indisputable how Anna pursues her ungratified pleasures, yet does not stop there and just as her relationship with Karenin repeats the similar destiny with Vronsky, going beyond pleasure. Her longing for a passionate relationship creates distress for her, and Vronsky comes as a fix to her miseries. Vronsky's passionate love appears superficial in fulfiling Anna's unceasing demand for romanticity superficially. She establishes Vronsky as an opportunity of retrieving her repressions that have been resisted and hidden somewhere in the unconscious for so long. Sabina Spielrein marks in her essay, 'Destruction as the cause of coming into being,' "With the abatement of the

feelings of pleasure and displeasure, the life of the psyche also is obliterated, but not in equal measures" (Spielrein 1994, 8). The conflict between Id and Ego [desires and rational reality] leads to the dominance of any one of the paradoxical drives in our lives. In the process of reducing unpleasure, sometimes we end up attracting even more unpleasure, and pain. The struggle between pleasant and unpleasant living forms the base of the majority of our psychic productions.

There are instances in literature where the death of a character has been critiqued and looked at from multiple lenses. But we often don't acknowledge how the person himself shares the blame for the suicide that happens. Psychologists and critics have had multiple opinions regarding the implication of the pleasure principle in life. Nevertheless, when observed microscopically, we often find behavioural instances, as in the case of Anna, where an otherwise evident structure could have a lot of loopholes imperceptible at the surface. A minute or unimportant thing sometimes becomes the sole reason for a person's distress. The conflicting forces of the drives either maintain balance and let one be resisted in remembering the repressions locked in the unconscious or trick into actions of overpowering these repressions by engaging in behaviours to conquer the unpleasure caused by the repressed desires. In the case of Anna, the latter happens, and she gradually loses control not only of her thoughts but also of her life. Anna Karenina is a famous as well as loved character, but this critical perspective of looking at her love, life, and death remains unexplored.

Although Freud is correct when he accepts striving for pleasure and suppression of displeasure as the basis of all psychic productions, Freud's theory of drives has been misinterpreted by multiple critics. As a result of which, not many people have researched the area positively. While analysing the psychological constructions of literary characters, these arguments of Freud offer a vast area to explore. Unfortunately, although some of the Freudian concepts have been accepted very well in the field of psychology as well as literature, the drive theory is not very well acclaimed and remains underrated.

Declaration of Conflicting Interests

The author(s) declare that there is no conflict of interest.

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